

DC-10 crashes at Sioux City; scores of 290 aboard survive



The fuselage of United Flight 232 that crashed Wednesday afternoon while attempting an emergency landing at Sioux City sits in a cornfield near the runway.

Passengers worried for full half hour

By FRANK SANTIAGO
and KEN FUSON
Register Staff Writers

SIoux CITY, IA. — For one horrible half-hour, passengers on United Flight 232 knew their plane was in trouble.

Some reviewed the cards with emergency landing instructions. Some prepared their children for the crash. Many prayed.

"When we were rolling on the side and the plane got bumpy and there was dirt flying around, I never thought I was going to die here," Gayle Notgrass said. "I kept praying that I wasn't going to die."

Notgrass, 25, and her son, Jimmy, 10, were among the survivors.

Where to call

Relatives of passengers may call these numbers for information:

- St. Luke's Regional Medical Center patient information: 712-279-3500, 712-279-3201; 712-279-3202; and 712-279-3203.
- Marian Health Center patient information: 712-279-2010; 712-279-2229, and 712-279-2775.
- United Airlines information: 312-952-6561, 312-952-4651; and 312-952-4492

THE WEATHER

Partly sunny today; highs mid-70s to low 80s. Clear to partly cloudy tonight, lows mid-50s to 60. Sunny and warmer Friday; highs in 80s. Sunrise 5:57 a.m. Sunset 8:44 p.m. Details: ST

Ann Landers	41	Jim Flansburg	11A
Business	55	Letters	11A
Closed ads	71	Lotteries	41
Comics	31	People in News	21
Crossword	21	Sports Roundup	45
Entertainment	10A	TV schedules	21

Passenger jet crashes in Iowa

United Airlines Flight 232 from Denver to Chicago carrying 298 people crashed Wednesday while attempting an emergency landing at Sioux City. One of the DC-10's engines failed during the flight, forcing the pilot to circle back to Sioux City.

The plane came in short of the runway at the northeast corner of the airport as the pilots attempted the landing, and the jet cartwheeled, breaking into pieces and exploding in a fireball about halfway down the runway.

Flight 232

- 12:45 p.m. MDT - Left Stapleton International Airport at Denver. Weather was clear, sunny and hot. One of the busiest times of day at the airport.
- 3:20 p.m. CDT - Engine 2 malfunctions. Plane lost altitude. Pilot had difficulty controlling the plane.
- 3:20-3:30 p.m. - Workers at the Mellow Dent Hybrids office in Alta, Ia. found a piece of an airplane.
- 3:30 p.m. - Connie Lander, who manages Airport Conoco, a gas station about a quarter-mile from the Sioux City airport, said she heard many emergency vehicles rushing toward the airport.
- 3:40 p.m. - Pilot told passengers he would attempt a landing in Sioux City.
- 3:57 p.m. - Crashed during emergency landing at Sioux City.

McDonnell Douglas DC-10

- First produced - 1971.
- Passenger capacity - 250 - 380.
- Worldwide commercial fleet - 369.
- Miles on fleet - 7 million.
- Airlines operating DC-10 world wide - 51.
- Engines - 3, General Electric and Pratt & Whitney.
- Wingspan - 165 feet.
- Fuselage length - 180 feet.
- Maximum speed - 600 mph.
- Maximum range - 6,300 miles.

Crippled jumbo jet falls short of runway, explodes in fireball

By LARRY FRUHLING
Register Staff Writer

SIoux CITY, IA. — A stricken United Airlines jumbo jetliner carrying about 290 people crashed Wednesday afternoon while attempting to make an emergency landing at the Sioux Gateway Airport here, taking a heavy toll of lives but sparing many of the passengers and all 11 crew members.

Officials said more than 100 passengers were dead or missing. Richard Voks, an aide to Gov. Terry Branstad, said 166 passengers survived the crash. But there was some uncertainty about the death toll in the chaos that followed the crash.

Witnesses who saw the United DC-10 tumble down the runway and disintegrate in flames were astounded to see some of the survivors walk away from the wreckage. The dead were found seated in the

MORE ON THE CRASH: Pages 4A, 5A

wreckage next to passengers who survived, witnesses said, and others who lived scurried from the debris past bodies on the runway still strapped in the airliner's seats.

Despite the fact that more than half of those on board apparently lived through the disaster, it still was one of the worst in the history of U.S. air travel.

The DC-10, United's Flight 232 from Denver to Chicago, slammed down near the boundary of the Sioux City airport and cartwheeled down the runway in a lengthening jumble of wreckage and fire.

Hank Sinda, city manager of Sioux City, said, "You have a piece of the plane and bodies and baggage all over. There are people strewn about everywhere — in the cornfield and on the runway."

Federal Aviation Administration officials said the plane had experienced "complete hydraulic failure" of the major systems that control an aircraft. The control problems apparently occurred after one of the big jet's three engines began breaking up during the flight over Iowa.

"The plane came in very low, very fast. It kind of tipped and went into a cartwheel and then burst into a big ball of flame," said Cookie Raskin, a worker at an airport restaurant who saw the crash. "I cannot believe what I saw and now I can't believe that so many people survived."

One of the survivors, Charles Martz, a Denver pilot, said that after wreckage of the plane had come to a halt, "It was like a battlefield — bodies and burns, clothes stripped off people."

A National Transportation Safety Board official said federal investigators